

and in that it comprises talc in an amount of less than 1 part per 100 parts by weight of polyethylene.

✓ 2. (Amended) Polyethylene-based composition for the manufacture of pipes and pipe couplings according to Claim 1, characterized in that the talc exhibits an essentially lamellar texture.

3. (Amended) Polyethylene-based composition for the manufacture of pipes and pipe couplings according to Claim 1, characterized in that the talc exhibits a particle size distribution situated between 0.2 and 15 microns and a mean particle size between 1 and 5 microns.

✓ 4. (Amended) Polyethylene-based composition for the manufacture of pipes and pipe couplings according to Claim 1, characterized in that the amount of talc is between 0.05 and 0.25 part per 100 parts by weight of polyethylene.

5. (Amended) Polyethylene-based composition for the manufacture of pipes and pipe couplings according to Claim 1, characterized in that the polyethylene is chosen from ethylene homopolymers and copolymers containing, in total, from 0.01 to 10 mole % of comonomers exhibiting a standard density of greater than  $943 \text{ kg/m}^3$  and not exceeding  $960 \text{ kg/m}^3$  and a melt flow index, measured at  $190^\circ\text{C}$  under a load of 5 kg according to ISO Standard 1133 (1991), of 0.07 to 5g/10min.

6. (Amended) Polyethylene-based composition for the manufacture of pipes and pipe couplings according to Claim 5, characterized in that the polyethylene is chosen from ethylene copolymers containing, in total, from 0.05 to 5 mole % of butene and/or of hexene.

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7. (Amended) Polyethylene-based composition for the manufacture of pipes and pipe couplings according to Claim 1, characterized in that it is in the form of extruded granules.

11/12. (Amended) In a process for the manufacture of an article, the improvement comprising shaping said article from a composition in accordance with Claim 1, [The process according to Claim 9,] wherein said article is a pipe shaped by extrusion.

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11/13. (Amended) In a process for the manufacture of an article, the improvement comprising shaping said article from a composition in accordance with Claim 1, [The process according to Claim 9,] wherein said article is a pipe coupling shaped by injection.

12/14. (Amended) In a process for the manufacture of an article, the improvement comprising shaping said article from a composition in accordance with Claim 1, [The process according to Claim 9,] wherein said article is a pipe intended for the transportation of pressurized fluids.

13/15. (Amended) A polyethylene composition for the manufacture of pipes and pipe couplings, comprising polyethylene which exhibits a standard density, measured at 23°C according to ASTM Standard D 972, of greater than 940 kg.m<sup>3</sup> and talc in an amount which does not exceed 0.5 part per 100 parts by weight of polyethylene.--

16. (Amended) Polyethylene-based composition for the manufacture of pipes and pipe couplings according to Claim 1, wherein talc is added in an amount effective to increase a creep resistance of said composition.

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